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WAYS AND METHODS EMPLOYED IN THE INDUSTRIALISATION OF THE SOVIET UNION

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WAYS AND METHODS EMPLOYED IN THE INDUSTRIALISATION OF THE SOVIET UNION

By I.V.Mayevsky, D.Sc.

Born of the Great October 1917 Socialist Revolution, the Soviet state inherited an extremely backward economy from the past. Industrially underdeveloped, pre-revolutionary Russia was mainly an agrarian country in which the survivals of serfdom and feudalism still existed. Small-scale production based on primitive implements was predominant in agriculture. In 1913 industry accounted for 42.1 per cent, and agriculture for 57.9 per cent of the aggregate industrial and agricultural output of the country. The technical and economic backwardness made Russia greatly dependent on the West-European capitalist powers.

The economic rehabilitation completed, it was necessary to accomplish, within the shortest possible period, socialist industrialisation of the country in order to build an adequate material and technical basis for socialism. Hence, the country was to be transformed from an agrarian into an industrial one capable of fully meeting the needs of the technical reconstruction of the national economy, and training millions of qualified workers and specialists.

The Socialist Revolution opened up new sources of investments, unprecendented in origin and scale. Nationalisation of big industrial enterprises, transport, land, foreign and home trade and banks -- all this made it possible to channel into industrialisation the part of the national income which had previously gone as profits to the Russian and foreign capitalist, interest on foreign loans and parasitic existence of the bourgeoisie and the landlords. As a result of the abolition of private landlord ownership by Soviet power, the peasants had no longer to pay rent to the landlords, to spend money on the purchase of land or to pay debts to the banks. The peasants, vitally interested in the technical reconstruction of agriculture and the national economy as a whole, contributed their own funds to the development of industry. Accumulations within industry became the chief source of investments for industrialisation. The volume of these accumulations was steadily mounting due to the growing productivity of labour and strict economy in production and management.

Socialisation of the means of production allowed planned economic development on a nation-wide scale, planned distribution of the means of production and labour force among the branches of the national economy and economic regions, as well as changes in the economic proportions in accordance with the tasks of a maximum development of socialist production and improvement of the people's living standards. In striving for a balanced development of different branches of the economy, the Soviet state took into consideration the requirements of both production and the public in establishing the main economic proportions, and first and foremost, proportions between production and consumption, the production of the means of production and the production of consumer goods, between industry and agriculture, the means of production and labour resources, between republics and regions, production and transport.

The national economic development plans of the Soviet state consistently provided for the priority development of heavy industry without which the rapid expansion of production and technical re-equipment of the national economy were unthinkable. The national economic reconstruction was completed within a short period. Already in 1937 large-scale industry accounted for 77.4 per cent of the aggregate industrial and agricultural output. As a result of socialist industrialisation, large-scale industry became dominant in the country. Socialist industrialisation was carried out between 1926 and 1937. Henceforth the Soviet Union has been developing as an industrial power.

The distinctive features of socialist industrialisation were determined by the specific historical situation and concrete conditions which prevailed in the country. Having neither experience in socialist industrialisation nor any economic aid from the outside, the Soviet Union nevertheless solved the problem of investments by using its internal resources. This inevitably gave rise to great difficulties in organising large-scale industrial production. Also characteristic of Soviet industrialisation was the development, within a brief historic period, of all branches of heavy industry necessary for the technical reconstruction of all branches of the national economy and the achievement of economic independence.

Socialist industrialisation was carried out in a multinational country whose peoples were at different stages of economic development and many of them had bypassed the stage of capitalism. Accordingly, the economic development of the national regions proceeded with due account being taken of economic, natural and national features of each republic; this enabled the Soviet state to determine rates and proportions of economic development of the national regions as well as the structure of industry and production.

Within a historically short period the republics of Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan turned into developed industrial and agricultural regions thanks to socialist industrialisation and the Leninist national policy. Such achievements became possible owing to the creative co-operation and mutual assistance of all the peoples of the multinational Soviet Union, which are characteristic of socialist industrialisation as well as of economic and cultural development under socialism in general. The industry of each national republic will continue to develop as an integral part of the Soviet economy, marching along the path of technical progress.

The preceding development of socialist society in the Soviet Union has paved the way for the all-round construction of communism in the country. The socialist economy of the Soviet Union has immensely surpassed the economy of old Russia. The 1961 industrial output of the Soviet Union was 44 times greater than in 1913.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted at the 22nd Congress its third Programme -- the Programme of the construction of communist society -- based on the general long-term plan of economic and cultural development for the coming twenty years (1961-80). Within twenty years the Soviet Union will increase the volume of industrial output by at least 6 times. The Soviet Union will build up unprecedentedly powerful productive forces which will be used to an ever growing degree to cover the entire range of public requirements, and world's highest standard of living will thus be achieved.

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